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1 June 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Organization of Soviet Science

Attitude of the Regime

1. The USSR has for many years placed great stress on scientific and technological progress as basic to the growth of its military, economic and political power. The regime has allocated a substantial and increasing part of the national product to the strengthening of science and technology. Manpower and educational policies established in the 1930's are designed to create a corps of superior scientific-technical manpower. In terms of social position and financial status, Soviet scientists as a class have constituted one of the privileged groups in the USSR.

2. The number of scientifically and technically trained people in the USSR has increased approximately three-fold in the post-war period. As of mid-1959, about 1,750,000 graduates of university-level scientific and technical curricula are employed in all scientific and technical fields, about 20 percent more than in the US. However, considering distribution, utilization, and quality, we believe that the over-all capability of Soviet scientific and technical personnel is still inferior to that of the US force.

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3. Following the death of Stalin, relations between the scientific community and the regime improved. Political and ideological interference diminished markedly, and the number of scientists participating in governmental councils increased. In contrast to the extreme insularity of the Stalin regime, Soviet leaders adopted a policy of acknowledging foreign achievement and encouraging maximum use of foreign experience, including contacts and exchanges between Soviet and foreign scientists. However, severe and continuing official criticism of Soviet scientists for their "isolation from life" indicates that the attitude of the regime is now being further modified. The return to favor of Trofim Lysenko, lauded by Khrushchev as a "practical scientist," symbolizes the renewed subordination of theoretical research to practical requirements. There are indications that the influence of industrial management on scientific research will increase and that pay scales for scientific research may be more directly related to practical results. Party control of science appears to be tightening. Despite these measures checking the post-Stalin trend toward liberalization, there will probably not be a return to the outright ideological interference which characterized the Stalin period.

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Organization

4. Academy of Sciences. The heart of scientific endeavor in the USSR is the Academy of Sciences, and its 450 Academicians stand in the front rank of Soviet science. The Academy, which is directly responsible to the Council of Ministers, has affiliates and associated academies in 13 of the 15 Union Republics. Through its eight departments, the Academy operates a large number of research institutes, laboratories and other working groups. About 70 percent of these institutions employing over 80 percent of the Academy's scientists have been concentrated in the Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Kharkov area. These institutions are the source of most of the top-level basic research although only about one-tenth of the scientific research done in the USSR is carried out within the Academy.

5. Higher Educational Institutions. Nearly half of all Soviet scientists are now employed in these institutions which include some 39 universities and about 375 technical institutes. Since they are concerned primarily with teaching, they devote proportionately less time to research than the scientists employed by the academies and the ministerial institutes.

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6. Ministerial Institutes. Until the economic reorganization of 1957, research institutes under individual ministries employed about two-fifths of all Soviet scientists. These facilities, which ranged from plant laboratories to large research institutions emphasized applied research in support of the industrial, military or other functions of each ministry. This category includes the Academy of Medical Sciences under the Ministry of Public Health and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences under the Ministry of Agriculture.

7. In marshalling their resources to achieve the ambitious goals of the Seven-Year Plan, Soviet leaders have undertaken major reorganizations of industry, education, agriculture and science. In science, the reorganization has had its major effect upon the ministerial institutes. As a result of the economic reorganization of 1957 a number of ministries were abolished and the research institutions formerly under their control were resubordinated. Institutes conducting research in high priority field were transferred to the control of State Committees under the Council of Ministers. Others dealing with problems of national significance were placed under the control of the State Planning Committee (GOSPLAN). The remaining institutes which dealt with problems of lesser scope were resubordinated to the appropriate republic, regional or local organ -- most of them to the new regional

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economic councils (sovnarkhozes). A number of research institutes are still controlled by the remaining all-Union or republic ministries. Thus, generally, administrative control over institutions conducting high priority research remained centralized, while administration of lower priority research was decentralized.

8. There is also to be a wider geographic distribution of scientific institutions and an increase in their number. Two new "scientific cities" are now being constructed in Novosibirsk and Irkutsk and expansion is underway or planned in a number of other cities. A number of research institutes are to be moved and steps are being taken to disperse some of the institutions and personnel of the All-Union Academy of Sciences, by relocating them and resubordinating them to republic Academies. Initially, the drain on manpower and resources from the older centers will undoubtedly affect some research programs adversely. In the long run, however, the increased number of scientific institutions distributed over a wider area probably will result in an improved scientific and technological capability.

9. We believe that generally the reorganization will produce the results desired by the Soviet leaders. By linking research institutions more closely to the production process, it should make

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them more responsive to industrial requirements; and, by means of the administrative and geographic decentralization it should give to these institutions a more specifically regional orientation. Except for some geographic decentralization, the Academy of Sciences appears to have been little affected by these changes. However, Academy institutes are expected to place greater emphasis on furnishing fundamental scientific support to applied research institutes. Similarly, the higher educational institutions are now to increase the amount of basic and applied research to provide more scientific and technical support for regional economic programs.

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